



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MAE 10 2006

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Robert Franciosi, Ph.D.
Deputy Associate Superintendent
Research and Evaluation
1535 West Jefferson Street, Bin 16
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Dr. Franciosi:

Thank you for submitting a proposal for consideration to participate in the Secretary's growth model pilot, which will allow selected States to use a growth-based accountability model to meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Each proposal is being reviewed internally to determine how well it meets the seven core principles laid out in the Secretary's November 21, 2005 letter, making it eligible to advance to peer review.

The initial review of Arizona's proposal indicates additional information is needed to determine how it meets the seven core principles. I remind you that an expected result from the pilot project is the ability to analyze how growth serves as a measure of accountability in comparison to the current status model. In accordance with Principle 4, such a comparison is only possible when a growth model and its growth targets are applied to all students and not only to students who missed the proficiency target. As we discussed in our March 9, 2006 phone call, please provide information to answer the following questions found in the Department's peer review guidance (please see www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/growthmodelguidance.doc for that information). The reference in parenthesis is to that particular element in the guidance document:

Principle 1. Universal Proficiency

- Has the State proposed technically and educationally sound criteria for "growth targets" for schools and subgroups? (Principle 1.2)
 - What are the State's "growth targets" relative to the goal of 100% of students proficient by 2013-14? (Principle 1.2.1)
 - Please describe the "expected" or average growth each year for a student.
 - Please clarify if it is possible that a student's growth target could be less than their "expected" growth to maintain their current level of performance.
- Has the State proposed a technically and educationally sound method of making annual judgments about school performance using growth? (Principle 1.3)
 - Has the State adequately described how annual accountability determinations will incorporate student growth? (Principle 1.3.1)

- Please provide a rationale for the use of a confidence interval in the growth model.
- Has the State adequately described how it will create a unified AYP judgment considering growth and other measures of school performance at the subgroup, school, district, and state level? (Principle 1.3.2)
 - Provide an example of how the growth model would be implemented for a typical school in 2013-14.
- Does the State proposed growth model include a relationship between consequences and rate of student growth consistent with Section 1116 of ESEA? (Principle 1.4)
 - Has the State clearly described the consequences the State/LEA will apply to schools? (Principle 1.4.1)
 - Please clarify that the proposed model applies consequences consistent with Section 1116.

Principle 4: Inclusion of All Students

- Does the State's proposed growth model address the inclusion of all students, subgroups and schools appropriately? (Principle 4.1)
 - Does the State's growth model address the inclusion of all students appropriately? (Principle 4.1.1)
 - Please clarify whether the growth model will be applied to all students in every school in the State.
 - Please clarify how the growth model applies the full academic year requirement.
 - Does the State's growth model address the inclusion of all subgroups appropriately? (Principle 4.1.2)
 - Provide an example of how the State will implement the minimum 'n' in the growth model.
 - Provide a description of how limited English proficient students will be included in the growth model.

Principle 5: Annual State Assessment System and Methodology

- How will the State report individual student growth to parents? (Principle 5.2)
 - How will an individual student's academic status be reported to his or her parents in any given year? (Principle 5.2.1)
 - Please clarify how Arizona proposes to report student growth to parents.

Principle 6: Tracking Student Progress

- Has the State designed and implemented a technically and educationally sound system for accurately matching student data from one year to the next? (Principle 6.1)
 - What evidence will the State provide to ensure that match rates are sufficiently high and also not significantly different by subgroup? (Principle 6.1.2)

- Provide additional information on match rates for above proficient and below proficient students.
- What quality assurance procedures are used to maintain accuracy of the student matching system? (Principle 6.1.3)
 - Provide additional information regarding quality assurance procedures used to maintain the accuracy of the student matching system.

As we discussed in our March 9, 2006 call, we will be further examining if and how the State has resolved a Title I monitoring finding regarding appeals based on results from students tested with non-standard accommodations and limited English proficient students served less than three years. The additional information you provide will be considered an addendum to Arizona's original application and will be included in the review process for the pilot. **The information should be submitted no later than March 17, 2006.** Please provide the information to Dr. Catherine Freeman at catherine.freeman@ed.gov.

I appreciate your interest in the growth model pilot. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Dr. Freeman at the email address above or by calling (202) 401-0113. I thank you in advance for your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry L. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Henry L. Johnson

cc: Superintendent Tom Horne